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QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN LITERARY WRITINGS

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Abstract:

The search for one's own identity is a common topic in postcolonial literature, and it is a story that unfolds over the course of a person's life, as they are dispersed and forced to adopt the identity of a "foreign place." "Identity" is a vague concept that has no meaning. When people are unable to meet their basic requirements and are unable to play a constant role in the society in which they live, they begin to search for a sense of identity. People are uprooted for a variety of causes, including partition, global wars, natural disasters, or the need to migrate in order to find better employment opportunities elsewhere. In the course of human history, migration has been a never-ending saga. We feel like we belong "everywhere," and then we feel like we don't belong anywhere anymore. Displaced persons had a difficult time adjusting to their new surroundings, recovering from the psychological impacts, and adjusting to their new surroundings. There was a new branch of literature called Diasporic literature that emerged as a result of people being forced to relocate. In Diasporic writing, the authors discovered a solution to their existing dilemma by expressing their inner thoughts. Authors of diasporic literature are concerned with the

issue of identity. Writers such as Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Rohinton Mistry and Jhumpa Lahiri have all come out of this terrible experience.. The primary focus of this paper is on how Lahiri's characters deal with issues of identity, isolation, conflict, and existence in her collection of short stories, "Unaccustomed Earth," and how they confront these perennial problems in order to establish their identities in the foreign land while contemplating their motherland left behind

Keywords:

Expatriates' experience, Diasporic literature, Jhumpa Lahiri, and the Unknown Earth are all phrases used to characterise the expatriate experience.

For more information, go here.

Introduction

Latin for "identity" is idem, which translates to "the same." A person's distinctive sense of self is shaped by a mix of their physical characteristics, character qualities, social position, cultural practises, language competence, and location of birth. As a result of losing his social and spiritual origins, the modern man's spiritual journey is known as the search for identity.

Migration



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People who migrate have a lot to give. I believe in their optimism, and what's the worst that may happen? A suitcase that's been stripped to the bare bones... From all corners of the globe, we've arrived unscathed. As a result of the currents of history, we have been pulled out of time and space. The following is a quotation from (Salman Rushdie, 1983: 87). Migration has become an integral component of human life as a consequence of globalisation. To put it another way, this indicates that they may not fit in quite so well if they hadn't had some time to become used to their new surroundings.

Displacement

There are several reasons for a person's relocation. In large measure, the division of Pakistan and Bangladesh played a role. In the wake of World War II, many individuals were forced to flee their homelands, and a sense of belonging to their home country has become a vital part of their identity. Displaced people's fight for identity does not stop with the search for a new location to call home. Voutira writes in her piece that the term "displacement" "no longer simply refers to persons travelling across borders, but to boundaries moving across people." The following is a quote from D.Chatty (2010:32).

From the Diaspora's Literature

There is a unique genre called Diasporic literature because of this. The word "Diaspora" conjures up images of people being torn apart by mental anguish, emotional turmoil, and even physical displacement. The word "Diaspora" was used to characterise the dispersion of the

Jews during the Diaspora. The benefits of diasporic writing

There was a lot of discussion about being an outsider, feeling marginalised, and dealing with an identity crisis. "The name Diaspora was used to characterise persons disposed, displaced and dispersed," yet this was not always the case. A Dawn Chatty, (2010:13),

Jhumpa Lahiri poignantly depicted the "Quest for Identity" through the perspective of her characters and how they handled with it.

Biographical Sketch of Jhumpa Lahiri

Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri, a Bengali novelist, used the pen name Jhumpa Lahiri in 1967 after moving to the United Kingdom with her Bengali parents.

At the age of three, Lahiri and her family migrated to the United States, where she pursued her education. For Interpreter of Maladies (1999), Lahiri was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Hemingway Award. The only two nations I actually know are America and India, which Lahiri has described in interviews as: "I feel partially American, yet I have an unclear relationship with both America and India." There is always a tinge of both feelings in my body." (brainyquote.com/quotes/jhumpa_lahiri_759721).

Jhumpa Lahiri's body of work includes the following:

One of the Maladies' Interpreters (1999)

Secondly, the name's originator (2003)

Astonishing Terrain (2008)

Lowland Areas (4) (2013)

The current research on Unaccustomed Earth Jhumpa Lahiri's third collection of short stories, Unaccustomed Earth (2008), was published in 2008.



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The tales in *Unaccustomed Earth* cover a wide range of topics, generally in a negative light; people deal with the struggle for identity and its ensuing crises in varied ways. The recounting of Ruma's mother's death opens the first tale, "Unaccustomed Earth". The main character, Ruma, is caught between two worlds. In 1994, (Homi Bhabha, 1994:2) After the tragic death of her mother, Ruma seeks to figure out who she is in her own right and how to balance her duties as a mother, a wife, and a daughter. To replace the void left by the loss of his wife and to have excellent "companionship" (Jhumpa Lahiri, 2009:30) with Mrs. Bagchi, Ruma's father seeks an identity from her. Reverting back to their Indian origins is something Ruma and her father do on occasion. Adding American cookies to Indian tea symbolises their mingled heritage. A cup of tea at the bottom of Ruma's cup was being served to guests upstairs." For further information, see (Jhumpa Lahiri, 2009:18). The father of Lahiri Akash seeks to convey the Bengali identity of his motherland to his grandson by utilising Bengali terms.

For her part, Aparna struggles to construct an identity to avoid a life of loneliness and melancholy in "Hell-Heaven," the book's second narrative. The sole purpose of her obsession with Pranab, an affinity with her own nation, is to alleviate her sense of homelessness. Based on Aparna's looks, Pranab reveals his desire to discover Aparna's origins. Usha, Aparna's daughter, is torn between her Indian heritage and her American upbringing. Deborah, a recent addition to Pranab's circle of friends, provides him with a sense of belonging.

The collection's third tale, "A Choice of Accommodation," brings everything to a close. It deals with a generational divide in which they

are always arguing about their identities. Amit and Megan want to give their married life a unique character and attempt to rekindle the romance of their relationship by taking a vacation. At Langford, Amit wants to be known as Pam, a gorgeous student. As a lucky coincidence, the final two letters of her name "am" are the first two letters of his name "Am," which he never disclosed to her but which made him feel that they were connected together. In 2009, Jhumpa Lahiri wrote the following:

The parents in the novella "Only Goodness" deal with their children's identity dilemma by enforcing tight discipline in the hopes that their children would only take in the good qualities of American society as they grow up. When her brother, Rahul, was permitted to wear shorts in the summer by his mother, Sudha urges her parents to do the same for her. Rahul's alcoholism, despite his rigorous upbringing, has left him with a poor reputation. It's now or never for him to return to any of these two universes. As a result of Rahul's blunder in managing Sudha's child, his relationship with her has been shattered.

The following chapter in the book is titled "Nobody's Business." Farouk, a janus-faced man who goes by the alias Freddy, is ready to expose his true identity to Indian-American Sangeeta Biswas. By entering Sang's personal space, Paul demonstrates his desire to be recognised. Paul's revelation of Farouk's relationship with Sang is the last twist in the tale.

"Hema and Kaushik seek to connect themselves with their Indian heritage," is the title of the trilogy that concludes *Unaccustomed Earth*. Shibani, Hema's mother, calls Kaushik's parents



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"stylish" because of their extravagant spending habits.

Next up comes "Year's End," told by Kaushik, who is also featured in the trio of stories. When Kaushik's mother dies, he sets off on a journey to discover who he is. His stepmother, a Bengali immigrant, brought vermilion to her hair, a custom his mother had eschewed, and the powdered red stain became the most distinguishing feature of her look. To use an example, (Jhumpa Lahiri, 2009:260). While moving out, Kaushik feels the stinging pain of "In-between space that innovates and disturbs the performance of the present," which is what he's going through. Hariharan, Homi Bhabha (1994), p.

Hema is the narrator of "Going Ashore," the concluding chapter of this trilogy. The first time Hemameet Kaushik sees each other after a long time, Kaushik tells Hemamee how he became famous by taking the "death" photograph during the battle. Kaushik's mother's death causes him to lose his identity at home, but the image of his mother enables him to build his identity. After Hema tells Kaushik she's engaged to be married to Navinand, the two of them split ways. After landing in Thailand, Kaushik discovers that the Tsunami of 2004 has prevented him from reaching "ashore" there. When he died, he was stripped of all that made him who he was.

Conclusion

In the pieces mentioned above, Lahiri does an excellent job of capturing the search for one's own identity in a short way. The title emphasises that the inhabitants in this story are unfamiliar with the "other" place that they might consider their "mother," and the letter "m" has a significant impact on their daily lives.

In the web of their "aspiration, option, selection, and rejection, they are trapped." These feelings are described as "the twilight of the aesthetic picture" by Homi Bhabha. Lahiri has a special position in the expatriate community because of her intuitive grasp of human nature.

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